

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

AN AMERICAN STORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you an American story. While I will not mention her name, the person is real. The woman is retired and she receives about \$900 per month in Social Security. That is the average amount that a retired American receives.

So this is more than a story about the one person I know. This is a story about millions of people across America. Millions of retired Americans receive \$900 per month to pay for food, clothing, housing, health care and everything else.

The administration recently professed its intent to address the health care crisis in this country. The President said so in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. The very next morning the administration announced a 17 percent increase in Medicare premiums. Seventeen percent is the largest increase in the history of Medicare.

Let me translate the increase into the every day life of an average senior citizen like the one I know drawing an average monthly payment. Over one-third, 37 percent of senior citizens entire monthly Social Security check will go to Medicare in 2006. That is just 2 years away. One-third of that \$900 is gone.

Now, if a senior is lucky they might have a family as this woman does who can give them some extra money each month. What about those without a family? What about the retirees who have seen their loved ones, their children struggle this these last 4 years without jobs or health care for themselves? After, all over the last 4 years 5 million Americans under the age of 65 have lost their health care coverage. Those who still have it are under increasing pressure from employers to pay more and more of premiums.

Every labor dispute is over health insurance. Companies like Ford and GM bluntly say they can not remain com-

petitive as things stand now. These are just the most recent headlines, the tip of the iceberg. The crisis gets deeper. Everyone in America today is either struggling with health care or knows someone who is.

Health care is an urgent national crisis, just like the drought we just heard about. But we are not treating it that way. If a category 5 hurricane were bearing down on us in the United States, as one really is, we would see bulletins in the media about the dangers to life and property. And we would see action by government to protect the citizens and get them out of harm's way.

Well, America's health care crisis is the perfect storm and it is already on shore wreaking havoc across this country. The damage to lives and property from health care crises is greater than a season of the greatest storms, yet we are forcing everyone to go it alone.

Here is one example. A law passed by the Republican leadership on behalf of the President forbids the Federal Government from negotiating lower prescription drug prices for American senior citizens. Never mind the other 250 million Americans who are getting no relief. When a health care plan announces a double digit increase, Americans have a choice, either pay or go without. When companies shift more of the health care burdens to employees, workers can either pay or go without. When half the bankruptcies in America today are from unpaid medical expenses democracy is at risk.

There is something fundamentally wrong in a society when people fail because they get sick. When an American gets sick the outcome ought to be health care that makes them well, not medical expenses that make them insolvent. But that is the way it is. When 37 percent, remember, of seniors total Social Security goes to Medicare premiums, when seniors spend another hundred or more dollars per month for supplemental coverage, when they have not included any cost for prescription drugs it begs the obvious.

How does someone buy food or shoes or pay for housing? Every senior citizen listening to me right now knows what I am talking about. When medical expenses take at least half of what a senior gets in Social Security, it is time to declare a medical emergency in U.S. health care coverage. It is time for universal health care.

As a medical doctor let me immediately vaccinate you from the certain administration attack. They will call it socialized medicine. And they will try to frighten the be-jesus out of you. That is standard procedure for the President and his surrogates. We do not say that about police and fire and roads and schools and everything else we do collectively. But with health care we say, you are on your own.

You should be afraid of what they have done over the last 4 years.

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Nothing for you but lots for special interests like big drug companies. I

think the drug companies deserve to make a profit. I mean, they should make something. I also think senior citizens deserve to eat every day and not have to choose between medication and food, and I think every American has the right to get well without going bankrupt.

America needs a universal health care system designed, built and financed by Americans. We can look at what other Nations have done and learn from their mistakes and successes. We can create a universal health care system that is of the people, by the people and for the people. The President will call it socialized medicine; I call it "Made in America."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO MR. LUTRELLE PALMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to the life and legacy of Mr. Lutrelle Palmer, better known as Lu, one of the greatest and most prolific journalists known in this country during the last half of the 20th century.

Mr. Palmer was born in 1922 in Newport News, Virginia. He attended the local schools, went to Virginia Union where he earned a bachelor's degree, then to Syracuse University where he was awarded a master's degree in communications. He then went on to the University of Iowa where he completed course work for a Ph.D. but lost his dissertation materials on a train and consequently never received his doctoral degree.

Lu worked for several newspapers and taught at a number of colleges and universities. He wrote for the Chicago Daily Defender, the Chicago Courier, the Chicago Daily News, the Tri state Defender, and he developed and owned